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Security Council

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Letter dated 22 May 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the conclusions of the General Affairs Council on the Middle East peace process (Brussels, 19-20 May 2003), issued on 19 May 2003 (see annex).

I would be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Adamantios Th. **Vassilakis**
Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 22 May 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Middle East peace process — Conclusions

1. The Council heard reports by Foreign Minister Papandreou and High Representative Solana on their visit to the region.

2. The Council condemned in the strongest terms all the recent suicide bombings and reiterated its call for an immediate end to all terrorist acts. The rejectionist forces opting for violence must not be allowed to derail the quest for a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is imperative to move from hatred to dialogue and from confrontation to peace.

3. The Council reiterated the importance of the Quartet's road map for the re-establishment of a positive political perspective in the region. It called upon both parties to seize the opportunity offered to put the Middle East peace process back on track. Both parties must do their utmost to ensure the swift implementation of the road map. The direct talks between Prime Minister Sharon and Prime Minister Abbas are a welcome step in the right direction. Visible and clear gestures of good faith by both are imperative in order to restore hope and promote stability in the Middle East. It is crucial that parallel progress is made in the political, economic and security fields. Time is of the essence; concrete action and results are needed now.

4. The European Union is ready to step up its cooperation with the United States and its other Quartet partners to advance confidence-building between the parties and to assist the implementation of the road map, including by helping to establish an effective and credible monitoring mechanism.

5. The Council welcomed the decision by the Palestinian Authority and Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas to accept the road map, as well as the new will on the Palestinian side to promote reform. It also welcomed the serious efforts undertaken so far, particularly on the issue of financial transparency, and looks forward to continued efforts on reform, including in the judiciary. The Council calls upon the Palestinian Authority to help break the cycle of violence and to urgently and effectively address the issue of security.

6. The Council underlined the importance of a clear commitment by the Government of Israel on the implementation of the Quartet road map as early as possible. The envisaged talks between Prime Minister Sharon and President Bush will be an important opportunity in that respect. The Council continues to be alarmed at the ongoing illegal settlement activities and land confiscations for the construction of the so-called security fence, which are an obstacle to peace by threatening to render the two-State solution physically impossible. The Council recognizes Israel's legitimate security concerns. It is, however, deeply preoccupied by the number of Palestinian civilian deaths and calls upon Israel to act within the constraints of international law, and not to impede access to humanitarian groups.

7. The European Union has spared no effort — and will continue to do so — to achieve peace in the Middle East, to the benefit of the people of the region and of

international peace and stability as well. In this context, the Council recalled that a comprehensive peace in the region must include Syria and Lebanon.

8. The Council asked High Representative Solana to remain engaged with the partners in the region as well as with the partners of the Quartet and to continue to promote the implementation of the road map.